

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF A STUDY OF THE SEWING
AND CLOTHING INTERESTS OF GIRLS 10 TO 18

preliminary report

PURPOSE

The study was undertaken to find out what should be included in the 4-H clothing program. Girls 10 to 18 were interviewed to find out:

The sewing background of the home.

The girls' interest and experience in clothing construction and selection.

SAMPLE

The sample was picked in an attempt to get a representative group of rural and urban girls from 5th grade through high school. Girls selected were from all types of schools, the one room rural, the consolidated rural, the consolidated village, small town grade school and the city, small town and rural high schools in six counties in the state (Kennebec, Knox-Lincoln, Waldo, Somerset and Washington). The largest high school had an enrollment of 450 girls, the smallest an enrollment of 15 girls. Counties included three coastal and three inland areas.

The girls were contacted at the schools during school hours. All girls in a school from 5th grade through high school were given the questionnaire. An additional 68 questionnaires were taken through personal interviews with girls in their third year in high school. Those 11th grade girls were chosen by random selection from schools not included in the larger sample. The purpose of these interviews was to get more detailed information on clothing attitudes and knowledge.

688 girls took part in the study. The age grouping was:

Number of records..... 688

9-12 years old	155
13, 14 years old	178
15 years old	142
16-18 years old	205

All girls in a school from 5th through 12th grade were included:

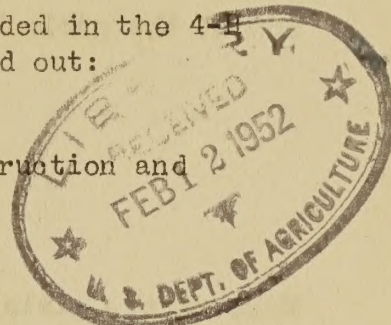
Number of records..... 688

Percent in 5th grade	6
6th	7
7th	9
8th	10
9th	20
10th	16
11th	18
12th	10

*Prepared by Maine Extension Service

1260(12-51)

SC 1951



35% of the girls belonged now or had belonged to 4-H Clubs.

Number of records 688

Percent in 4-H Clubs now	15
past	20

56% of the girls belonged now or had belonged to other organization.

Number of records..... 688

Percent in other org.	
now or past	56
Percent in no org. now	
or ever	7

Most of the girls came from homes which have sewing machines.

Number of records..... 688

Percent of homes with	
sewing machines	89

23% of the homes had electric sewing machines. Over half of the girls thought their families did a lot of sewing on the sewing machine.

Number of records..... 688

Percent Yes	52
No	33
Don't know	3
No machine	10

80% of the mothers sewed on the sewing machine.

Number of records..... 688

Percent of mothers	80
grandmothers	15
sisters	33

Articles made in the girls' homes by family members ranged from snow suits and tailored coats to aprons.

Number of records..... 688

	For Grown-ups	For Sch. Girls	For Children
Percent making			
suits & coats	24	20	18
dressess	61	55	40
blouses & skirts	54	61	44
aprons, pajamas,			
gowns	63	52	38
snow suits	-	-	10

Two out of three of the girls said mending and patching were done in the home.

SEWING EXPERIENCE

TRAINING

Nearly all the girls have had some training in sewing.

Number of records..... 688

Percent getting sewing training in 4-H	24
7 & 8 gr.	31
high school	24
scouts	15
at home	76
any other	
place	6
no sewing	
training	5

Almost every home had a sewing machine in the home or one available for family use.

Number of records..... 688

Percent having machines available	89
Electric machines	23
treadle machines	64

Girls were allowed to use the machine in most homes.

		Percent of each age group			
		9-12	13,14	15	16-18
	Total	years	years	years	years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls allowed to use machine.....	84	72	90	82	93
Percent of girls not allowed to use machine.....	15	27	10	17	6

Some of the girls had used a sewing machine at school.

		Percent of each age group			
		9-12	13,14	15	16-18
	Total	years	years	years	years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent using machine at school...	37	7	31	38	63
Percent not using machine at school	47	64	58	43	28
Percent not allowed to use a mach.	15	27	10	17	6

SEWING DONE BY THE GIRLS

All types of machine sewing were reported.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent making doll clothes.....	53	56	62	43	50
towels, scarfs,	26	24	33	20	25
stuffed dolls	24	16	34	23	23
holders	50	42	61	47	49
laundry bags	12	8	16	12	11
aprons	49	32	57	43	59
pajamas, gowns	12	3	10	11	22
blouses	26	6	22	34	39
skirts	38	14	38	35	60
dresses	21	6	13	23	38
coats & suits	2	1	-	2	6

Personal interviews with high school juniors (11th grade) reported the following articles made at school:

Number of records..... 53

Percent making towels, scarfs, etc.	9
holders	3
aprons	25
gowns and pajamas	5
blouses	37
skirts	35
dresses	17
coats and suits	3
other articles	9

Only hand sewing was done by 22% of all the girls.

Number of records..... 688

Percent sewing with machine	77
only by hand	22

Hand sewing done was mostly clothing repair work or embroidery and knitting.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent making dolls clothes	66	77	71	58	58
sewing on buttons	94	91	97	95	94
darning socks	66	49	66	73	75
patching	60	45	70	60	61
mending ripped seams	70	45	75	76	81
putting up hems	64	34	68	70	78
making buttonholes	36	30	31	37	43
hemming towels	24	10	24	28	31
embroidering	61	43	70	59	69
crocheting	25	18	22	26	33
knitting	58	49	64	63	58

LEVELS OF SEWING DONE

Number of records..... 688

Percent doing sewing no more difficult than doll clothes	1
hand mending only	8
nothing more difficult than handwork	18
towels to laundry	
bags	8
aprons	15
blouses, skirts	26
dresses	18
coats	2

CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION INTEREST

ENJOYMENT

Half of the 9-12 year olds got their greatest enjoyment from making dolls' clothes, while the 16-18 year olds found their greatest sewing satisfaction in making skirts.

GREATEST ENJOYMENT

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent dolls' clothes	19	50	15	9	6
stuffed animals	3	5	3	1	3
embroidery	8	5	12	10	6
crocheting	2	1	2	4	3
knitting	8	7	10	9	5
aprons	8	8	12	7	6
blouses	7	2	5	9	11
skirts	18	3	23	19	26
dresses	12	2	9	13	21
coats and suits	0.4	-	-	-	1

When asked what they wanted most to make 42% of these girls said dresses.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of knitting	3	5	5	2	1
aprons	2	6	.5	1	.48
nightgowns, pajamas	1	3	1	-	-
blouses	13	13	19	12	6
skirts	11	18	24	21	11
dresses	42	53	46	37	33
coats and suits	22	12	-	14	25

It was interesting to note that three quarters of the girls 9 to 12 had made doll clothes, but that very few wanted to make them. Two-thirds of those who had made them enjoyed them the most even though they had done more difficult sewing.

Number of girls 9-12	155
Percent making doll clothes	77
enjoyed making doll clothes	51

Of these 51% who enjoyed making doll clothes, 95% had done more difficult sewing.

Fifty percent of the girls made holders. Eighty-one percent of the girls who had sewing training in 4-H Club work had made them, whereas 40% of the others had. Only 5% had enjoyed them most, and only 2 girls out of 688 wanted to learn to make them.

Knitting presents about the same pattern--50% had done some knitting, but 5% or less got greatest enjoyment from it or wanted to learn to do it.

Making skirts showed a different pattern by ages. These were made by more girls than any one other type of garment. Fourteen percent of the 9-12 year olds made skirts; 60% of those 16 and over. Only 3% of the 9-12 year olds greatly enjoyed making them; 27% of those 16 and over reported getting their greatest enjoyment from making skirts. However, one-fourth of the 9-12 year olds wanted to make skirts and only one-tenth of those 16 and over wanted to.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13-14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls making skirts		14	38	35	60
enjoying "		3	23	19	27
wanting to		19	25	22	11

Only 6% of the 9-12 year olds had made dresses, while 38% of the girls 16 and over had made them. Two percent of the 9-12 year olds had enjoyed making dresses. Twenty-one percent of the girls 16 and over reported enjoyment from making dresses. Over half (53%) of the younger age group wanted to make dresses, while only a third of the older age group indicated a desire to make dresses.

Of the 143 girls who had made a dress, one-fifth wanted to learn more about making dresses. Of the 545 girls who had not made a dress, one-half wanted to learn how to make one.

Only a small percentage of girls in any age group had made coats and suits, 1 out of the 178, 9-12 year olds and 6% of the girls 16 and over (13 girls).

Again, only 1% of the 16 year olds and over indicated that they had enjoyed making coats and suits, but a fourth of this age group wanted to make coats and suits, as did 12% of the 9 to 12 year olds. In the 9-12 age group, only 14% had ever even made a skirt; only 6% had ever made dresses.

It is interesting to note that regardless of the level of sewing experience the girls wanted to make dresses or coats and suits. However, the desire to make coats or suits was directly related to their level of sewing experience; one-half the girls who had made a dress wanted to make a suit or coat. Only one-eighth of those who had not made a dress wanted to make a suit or coat.

WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO LEARN TO MAKE AS RELATED TO THEIR SEWING EXPERIENCE

	Total 'number 'of 'records'	% with each level of sewing experience who reported they would like to learn to make:					
		Aprons,	Hand-pajamas,	Blouses,	& Dresses	Suits	Other*
		work	etc.	skirts			
Total.....	678	4	1	10	37	23	17
Levels of sewing experiences:							
Hand mending but nothing more difficult	59	2	3	8	44	3	16
Hand work, but nothing more difficult	129	6	2	16	36	8	22
Towels, kerchiefs but nothing more difficult	58	2	3	17	52	12	8
Aprons, pajamas, but nothing more difficult	107	5	-	16	52	7	14
Blouses, skirts, but nothing more difficult	179	6	1	7	39	24	21
Dresses, but nothing more difficult	128	3	-	4	16	60	13
Coats and suits	18	6	-	-	28	44	22

CLOTHING SELECTION

COATS AND SUITS

The mothers' or parents' decision is an important factor in the selection of clothes for the younger girls.

*Most of these were as complicated as coats and suits or dresses.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13, 14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls who reported that they themselves decide what is needed.....	24	1	17	24	48
Percent of girls who reported that they and their parents decide.....	28	20	35	29	26
Percent of girls who reported that their parents decide.....	46	77	46	45	24

Mothers' or both parents' decision about price of girls' coats and suits is important at all ages.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13, 14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls who reported that they themselves decide price.....	12	2	7	6	29
Percent of girls who reported that they and their parents decide.....	10	4	10	16	12
Percent of girls who reported that their parents decide.....	76	91	81	76	57

Over three-fourths of the 16-18 year olds decide the style of coats and suits they buy.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13, 14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls who reported that they themselves decide styles needed.....	59	27	53	72	80
Percent of girls who reported that they and their parents decide style.....	20	26	27	17	13
Percent of girls who reported that their parents decided style.....	20	46	19	9	6

Mother enters into the decision about coats and suits that look well for all the 9-12 year olds and for three-quarters of the 16-18 year olds.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent of girls who reported that they themselves decide what coats & suits <u>look well</u>	12	-	15	15	22
Percent of girls who reported that they and parents decide	31	25	32	36	35
Percent of girls who reported that their parents decide..	56	74	62	47	42

Color choices in coats and suits are made by the girl more frequently than by the mother.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	152	205
Percent of girls who reported that they themselves decide what <u>color</u> is needed.....	73	55	73	75	86
Percent of girls who reported that they and their parents decide.....	17	21	21	17	11
Percent of girls who reported that their parents decide....	8	22	23	5	2

BLOUSES, SKIRTS, DRESSES

Nearly 90% of 16-18 year olds decide or help decide on the blouses, skirts and dresses they need. The opposite is true for the little girls.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records	688	155	178	142	205
Percent girl decides.....	42	13	34	48	68
girl & parents decide..	24	21	33	29	17
parents decide.....	33	64	32	22	13

Parents decided how much shall be paid for dresses, blouses and skirts in two-thirds of the cases and made the decision with the girls in another one-seventh of the cases. Little girls have very little to say about price, but half of the 16-18 year olds do.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent girl decides.....	16	3	9	11	35
girl and parents.....	14	4	13	19	16
parents decide.....	68	88	76	67	48

Older girls largely make their own decisions about styles of blouses, skirts and dresses.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent girl decides.....	62	31	55	75	83
girls & parents decide..	20	23	28	15	11
parents decide.....	16	42	16	7	4

In over two-thirds of the cases, parents decided what blouses, skirts and dresses looked well on the 9-12 year olds, and entered into the decision in all age groups.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent girl decides.....	16	5	10	20	25
girl and parents decide	31	20	28	39	38
parents decide.....	50	72	59	40	34

Over half of the 9-12 year olds decide what colors they will get for blouses, skirts and dresses, practically all the older girls make their own decision.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent girl decides.....	74	53	73	79	87
girl and parents decide	16	23	18	16	10
parents decide.....	9	22	7	4	2

BUYING CLOTHES WITH OWN MONEY

Nearly all of the girls had bought some clothes with money they had earned themselves.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent buying some clothes....	83	74	87	90	83
all clothes.....	7	3	3	4	14
none.....	8	21	8	4	2

Sweaters, blouses and skirts were the clothing items girls most frequently purchased with their own money.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent buying underwear.....	15	13	16	19	12
stockings, socks	19	31	17	15	15
sweaters, skirts,					
blouses.....	69	36	91	83	82
dresses, suits..	44	32	43	45	52
coats.....	14	2	12	16	25
hats, caps.....	1	-	1	2	1
other articles..	35	36	38	32	35

Personal interviews with high school juniors showed that only 22% of these girls planned clothing purchases so that their wardrobes for the year would be complete at the start of the school year.

Number of records.....	53	
Percent having clothes for year when school started		22
not having clothes for year when school started		77

Most of the girls did no school wardrobe planning during the summer vacation.

Number of records.....	53	
Percent planning wardrobe in summer		15
month before school		5
just before school		1
no advance plan		77

Thirty-nine of the 41 girls who had not planned their school wardrobes reported adding new garments after the start of the school year, and these data were collected in December.

Number of records.....	53	
Percent adding new pieces		73

Skirts and sweaters were the items most frequently purchased.

Number of records.....	53	
Percent adding skirts		62
sweaters		60
blouses		33
shoes		37
socks, stockings		18
dresses		18
coats		13
jackets		9
other		24

Dresses led the list of items girls planned to add to their wardrobes, with skirts and sweaters in second place.

Number of records.....	53
Percent planning to get skirts	24
sweaters	22
blouses	9
shoes	13
socks, stockings	1
dresses	33
coats	11
jackets	1
other items	11
additional clothes	9

Most common reason given for buying additional pieces of clothing was to get items for some special occasion.

Number of records.....	53
Percent buying for special occasion	21
because like item	9
like & can afford	2
when need arises	19
because new fashion	2
have money	11
tired of old	15
to go with something	5
when old wears out	7
because want	9
need change	13
outgrown	4
don't know why	2

Color choices in new items were planned to go with clothing the girls already owned in 60% of the cases.

Number of records.....	53
Percent because liked color	18
to go with something	60
buying a basic color	8
to have something different	14
a becoming color	18
for wardrobe variety & balance	6

Becomingness to the girl was the biggest single point in determining styles of garments.

Number of records.....	53
Percent buying because they liked it	22
it looked best	46
present or new styles	28
what's available	2
for change, variety	10
to go with what have	10
what is practical	4
for use they needed it for	4

THE LITTLE GIRLS' CLOTHING SELECTION PROBLEM

	Percent of Girls
Number of records from girls 9-12	155
She decides what <u>coats</u> or <u>suits</u> she needs.....	1
She decides on price.....	2
She decides on style.....	27
She decides whether they look well on her.....	3
She decides on color.....	55
She decides what <u>blouses</u> , <u>skirts</u> , <u>dresses</u> she needs.....	13
She decides on price.....	3
She decides on style.....	31
She decides on becomingness.....	5
She decides on color.....	53
She buys with own money: Underwear.....	13
Socks and stockings.....	31
Skirts, blouses, sweaters.....	36
Dresses.....	32
Other.....	36
She would like to know more about style.....	41
She would like to know more about her best color.....	40
She would like to know what colors are best together.....	41
She would like to know about suitability of clothing for the occasion.....	21-41

The girls between 13 and 15 show a trend between these little girls and the older high school girls 16 to 18.

THE OLDER HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' CLOTHING SELECTION PROBLEM

	Percent
Number of records from girls 16-18	205
She decides what <u>coats</u> or <u>suits</u> she needs.....	48
on price.....	29
on style.....	80
whether they look well on her.....	22
on color.....	86
She decides what <u>blouses</u> , <u>skirts</u> , <u>dresses</u> she needs.....	68
on price.....	35
on style.....	83
on becomingness.....	25
on color.....	87
She buys with own money: Underwear.....	12
Socks and stockings.....	15
Skirts, blouses, sweaters.....	82
Dresses.....	52
Coats.....	25
Other.....	35

She has added to her wardrobe from Sept. to Dec.:

	Percent of Girls
Number of records.....	53
Skirts.....	62
Sweaters.....	60
Shoes.....	37
Blouses.....	33
Dresses.....	18
Coats.....	13
Jackets.....	9
Other.....	25

She would like to know more about:

Number of records.....	205
Style.....	32
Best colors.....	37
Color best together.....	32
Suitability.....	19-32

The older group showed greater confidence in their own ability to make clothing choices.

CLOTHING UPKEEP AND REPAIR

Nearly all the girls had some experience in doing clothing repair jobs. Nearly all had sewed on buttons. From 1/3 to 1/2 of the little girls (9-12) had darned socks, mended seams, etc., whereas from 2/3 to 3/4 of girls 13 and over had done these jobs.

In contrast practically no girls expressed their greatest enjoyment in doing these tasks or in learning how to do them.

EXPERIENCE IN CLOTHING AND REPAIR

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent sewing on buttons.....	94	91	97	95	94
darning socks.....	66	49	66	73	75
patching.....	60	45	70	60	61
mending ripped seams.....	70	45	75	76	81
putting up hems.....	64	34	68	70	78
making buttonholes.....	36	30	31	37	43

PRESUMED KNOWLEDGE

Only 54% of all the 688 girls aged 9 to 18 felt they knew what colors looked best on them. The older ones were more confident than the little girls.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing the best colors for themselves.....	54	35	52	53	57
Percent not knowing best colors for themselves.....	7	12	6	5	5
Percent not sure of best colors for themselves.....	30	31	35	28	19

Again, 62% of the girls felt they knew which colors went best together.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing what colors best go together.....	62	50	60	66	69
Percent not knowing what colors best go together.....	8	14	10	4	3
Percent not sure what colors best together.....	22	27	24	21	17

Less than half of the girls regardless of age felt they knew the styles which were most becoming to them.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing best style for themselves.....	43	42	35	45	48
Percent not knowing best styles for themselves.....	15	22	19	11	9
Percent not sure.....	31	27	34	28	32

Only a third of the girls felt that they knew the kind of clothes most suitable for a tea.

	Total	Percent of each age group			
		9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing.....	32	27	28	38	35
not knowing.....	23	26	25	21	20
not sure.....	31	27	34	28	32

On the other hand nearly two-thirds of the girls felt they knew what clothes were the best choice for party wear.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing.....	67	71	63	72	63
not knowing.....	6	7	7	4	4
not sure.....	16	14	19	12	17

Most girls in all age groups felt they know how to dress for church.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing.....	78	74	76	81	80
not knowing.....	3	5	2	2	2
not sure.....	8	10	10	4	7

Seventy percent of all the girls felt they knew the clothes most suitable for wear on a shopping trip.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing.....	70	74	56	61	60
not knowing.....	5	5	7	6	2
not sure.....	14	14	16	9	15

Seventy-five percent of girls felt they knew shoes best suited to wear with a good dress.

	Percent of each age group				
	Total	9-12 years	13,14 years	15 years	16-18 years
Number of records.....	688	155	178	142	205
Percent knowing.....	73	68	70	69	81
not knowing.....	5	7	7	5	1
not sure.....	17	18	17	20	12

INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT CLOTHING SELECTION

Almost half of girls were interested in learning the colors which were best for them while less than a fourth felt they wanted to know the clothes most suitable for church.

Differences in age made very little difference as far as interest was concerned.

	<u>Percent</u>
Number of records.....	688
Percent want to know best colors.....	44
colors best together.....	39
best styles.....	39
clothes for tea.....	39
clothes for party.....	29
clothes for church.....	23
clothes for shopping.....	25
shoes for best dress.....	27

